



The Sacredness of Marriage and Declining Marriage Rates Among Youth

(Case Study on Komunitas Mahasiswa Pecinta Ilmu Jember)

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Abstract

This research aims to analyse and discover the views of members of the Komunitas Mahasiswa Pecinta Ilmu (KMPI) Jember on the sacredness of marriage and the decline in marriage rates among young people, as well as the factors that cause KMPI Jember members to decide not to get married. Society, especially youth, no longer considers marriage as something sacred. Marriage is increasingly viewed merely as a biological imperative, achievable outside marital bonds. This view encourages the younger generation to be reluctant to get married. This research uses a qualitative approach. The criteria for the informants chosen in this study are members of KMPI Jember who are not married in the age category between 16 sixteen to 30 (thirty) years. The results of this research show that the views of KMPI Jember members on the sacredness of marriage include (1) something serious and full of responsibility, (2) irrelevant to current conditions and (3) influenced by religious and cultural education. KMPI Jember members' views on the decline in marriage rates among young people include (1) having a close relationship with social and cultural values, (2) being influenced by economic factors and (3) the role of education and career. Factors that cause KMPI Jember members to decide not to get married are (1) economic and emotional stability, (2) family and neighbourhood pressure and (3) education and career.

Keywords: sacredness, marriage, perspective, youth, community

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Introduction

Islamic law (Sharia) governs the lives of all Muslims.¹ Islam is a religion revealed by Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* with the aim of perfecting the lives of people in religion. One of them is for perfection in the family from the bond of legal marriage among Muslims.² Marriage is the first step in starting a family in Islam.³ Pernikahan merupakan suatu ikatan mulia yang menyatukan dua insan untuk hidup dan meraih ketenangan didalamnya. Marriage is a noble bond that unites two people to live and achieve peace in it. Allah (*subhānahu wa ta'ālā*) states,

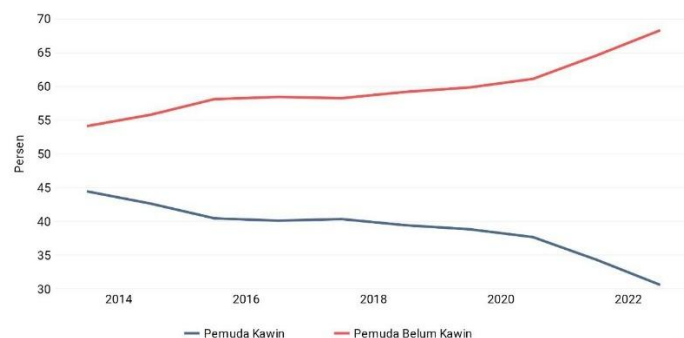
﴿وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا﴾

“Among the signs of His greatness is that He created mates for you from your own kind so that you may be at peace with them.”⁴

Living in pairs is the nature of living beings in the world.⁵ Marriage is considered a sign of a person's maturity in social, economic and even spiritual life. However, this view is beginning to change, especially among the younger generation who no longer see marriage as sacred or an obligation that must be fulfilled. Instead, many of them delay or even reject marriage for certain reasons.

The Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) reported that 68.29% or the majority of the country's youth are unmarried. Meanwhile, the percentage of married youth is 30.61%. According to BPS (2023, in the last ten years the development of the percentage of married and unmarried youth has been contradictory, with the percentage of married youth decreasing while the percentage of unmarried youth has increased.⁶

Picture 1: Percentage Chart of Indonesian Youth by Marital Status (2014-2023)



Source: Report of Badan Pusat Statistik reprocessed by databoks

The trend of young people getting married has been consistently declining in the past six years. In fact, the percentage of married youth in 2023 will be the lowest in the last decade. In 2014, married youth was recorded at 44.45%. In contrast, unmarried youth has consistently risen above 50%, or more than half of Indonesia's total youth, since 2014.⁷

¹ Nirwan Nazaruddin, 'Sakinah, Mawaddah Wa Rahmah Sebagai Tujuan Pernikahan: Tinjauan Dalil Dan Perbandingannya Dengan Tujuan Lainnya Berdasarkan Hadits Shahih', *Jurnal Ayy-Syukriyyah* 21, no. 02 (2020): 164–74.

² Asman et al., *Hukum Perkawinan Islam Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Pena Muda Media, 2023).

³ Asman et al.

⁴ QS. Ar-Rum (30): 21.

⁵ Abdul Kholik, 'Konsep Keluarga Sakinah, Mawaddah Dan Rahmah Dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam', *Masile* 1, no. 1 (2019): 108–26.

⁶ <https://databoks.katadata.co.id/datapublish/2024/01/03/tren-pernikahan-anak-muda-semakin-turun-6-tahun-terakhir> accessed on 27 April 2024.

⁷ Badan Pusat Statistik, *Statistik Pemuda Indonesia 2023*, <https://www.bps.go.id/id/publication/2023/12/29/18781f394974f2cae5241318/statistik-pemuda-indonesia-2023.html> accessed on 27 April 2024.

An interesting point was made by Derajad Sulisty Widhyharto. Quoted from the *kompas.id* website, the sociologist from Gadjah Mada University said that people's views on values have changed. Marriage is no longer considered something sacred, but only considered a biological need. If marriage is only seen as a biological need, it can be fulfilled without a marriage bond. This view encourages the younger generation to be reluctant to get married.⁸

The sacredness of marriage refers to the level of honour, spiritual value and importance of the institution of marriage in a society. Marriage is regarded as sacred, honoured and considered to have deep meaning. The sacredness of marriage is often based on traditions, religion and culture that are passed down from generation to generation. Marriage is something that is very sacred in religion, law and custom. It is also a very happy and *instrumental* moment in a person's life journey.⁹

In substance, marriage is carrying out religious orders, where marriage has religiosity values that are closely related to the implementation of the marriage contract.¹⁰ The importance of the sacredness of marriage is reflected in traditional ceremonies, religious rituals, and social norms that govern the relationship between married couples. The sacredness of marriage plays an important role in strengthening the emotional and spiritual bonds between husband and wife, as well as providing a moral foundation for the family and society at large.

Komunitas Mahasiswa Pecinta Ilmu Jember (KMPI) Jember is a community under the auspices of the KMPI Bersinergi Foundation which was formed from a concern for the condition of Muslims in Indonesia. Komunitas Mahasiswa Pecinta Ilmu Jember (KMPI) Jember is based on the background of its members who are students who love religious knowledge and are always eager to learn Islam and practice knowledge and teach others. Komunitas Mahasiswa Pecinta Ilmu (KMPI) Jember focuses on Islamic programmes such as Islamic religious counseling, discussion forums, social services, and the creation of Islamic content in print and electronic media.¹¹

The results of searches that have been carried out so far have not found research that discusses the perspectives of members of the Komunitas Mahasiswa Pecinta Ilmu (KMPI) Jember on the sacredness of marriage and the decline in marriage rates among young people. The few scientific studies found with the closeness of the problems studied in this study include:

First, research conducted by Rosleny Marliani in 2023 with the title “*Sakralitas Pernikahan dan Kedewasaan Diri dalam Analisis Resiliensi Keluarga Muslim di Kota Bandung*”,¹² the approach used in the study is a quantitative approach. The results showed that awareness of the sacredness of marriage (X1) and the age of marriage (X2) had a positive and significant role on Family Resilience (Z), with self-maturity (X3) as a mediator (Y).

Second, a study entitled “*Faktor yang Mempengaruhi Penurunan Angka Pernikahan di Indonesia*” in 2022 conducted by Indira Setia Ningtias,¹³ the approach used in the study was a qualitative approach. The results of the study show that among the factors that have caused the decline

⁸ <https://www.kompas.id/baca/humaniora/2024/03/07/angka-perkawinan-turun-perspektif-perkawinan-berubah-tak-lagi-sakral> accessed on 27 April 2024.

⁹ Muhammad Ngizzul Muttaqin, ‘Resepsi Pernikahan (Antara Sakralitas Agama, Hukum, Dan Tuntutan Adat)’, *Bilancia: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Syariah Dan Hukum* 14, no. 1 (2020): 13–26.

¹⁰ Muttaqin.

¹¹ Adam Sulaiman, ‘Persepsi Anggota Komunitas Mahasiswa Pecinta Ilmu Terhadap Karakteristik Message Influence Budaya Bercadar di Channel Youtube Bglenggot-Media Dakwah Islam’ (undergraduate, Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, 2018), <https://digilib.uinkhas.ac.id/27913/>.

¹² Rosleny Marliani, ‘Sakralitas Pernikahan Dan Kedewasaan Diri Dalam Analisis Resiliensi Keluarga Muslim Di Kota Bandung’, *Journal of Islamic and Contemporary Psychology* 3, no. 1s (2023): 1–15.

¹³ Indira Setia Ningtias, ‘Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Penurunan Angka Pernikahan Di Indonesia’, *Jurnal Registratie* 4, no. 2 (2022): 87–98.

in marriage rates are globalisation, social problems that demand standards of success, rising divorce rates, the *covid-19* pandemic, the birth of Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Marriage and the phenomenon of *nikah siri*.

Third, research conducted by Budi Mulyadip in 2018 with the title “*Fenomena Penurunan Angka Pernikahan dan Perkembangan Budaya Omiai Di Jepang*”,¹⁴ the approach used in the study is a qualitative approach. The results of the study show that one of the factors behind the decline in marriage rates in Japan is the relatively new "freedom" that young Japanese people have, as a result of reduced social pressure to settle down and start a family. Japan has also experienced a shift in attitudes between the sexes, with young women increasingly seen as career-orientated and placing their own desires above the need to start a family.

Fourth, a study entitled “*Pemberdayaan Ibu Sebagai Strategi Penurunan Angka Pernikahan Dini*” in 2019 conducted by Ita Puji Lestari, et al.¹⁵ approach used in the study is a qualitative approach. The results of the study show that one of the efforts to prevent early marriage is to optimise the role of parents, especially mothers, so far empowerment has not been optimised in this aspect so that handling the risks posed by early marriage has not received special attention.

Fifth, research conducted by Clearestha Nakita and Anjar Sri Ciptorukmi Nugraheni in 2024 with the title “*Upaya Penurunan Angka Perkawinan Anak*”,¹⁶ the approach used in the study was a qualitative approach. The results of the study indicate that the results of the study indicate that the urgency of efforts to reduce the number of child marriages in Nawangan District is viewed from the health aspect, economic aspect, psychological aspect and legal aspect. Meanwhile, efforts to reduce the number of child marriages in Nawangan Subdistrict are carried out through socialisation and counseling conducted by the Head of Nawangan Subdistrict with stakeholders, namely the head of RT / RW, Village Head, Puskesmas, educational institutions, and Agencies.

Although a number of studies have been conducted on the sacredness of marriage and the decline in marriage rates, especially among young people, no study has specifically examined young people's perspectives on this issue. Existing studies have focused more on global and social factors that influence the decline in marriage rates, such as the influence of globalisation, pandemics, and socio-cultural changes in various countries. Furthermore, previous studies tend to view this phenomenon from a general or group perspective, such as Muslim families in Bandung or young people in Japan, without considering the perspectives of student groups, which have different social dynamics and values. Therefore, this study aims to fill the knowledge gap regarding how members of the student community view the sanctity of marriage and the factors that influence their decisions regarding marriage, particularly among young people.

The difference between this study and the previously mentioned studies is that this study examines the perspectives of members of the Komunitas Mahasiswa Pecinta Ilmu (KMPI) Jember on the sacredness of marriage and the decline in marriage rates among young people. Based on these findings, researchers are interested in conducting research and exploring further the perspectives of members of the Komunitas Mahasiswa Pecinta Ilmu (KMPI) Jember on the sacredness of marriage and the decline in marriage rates among young people. The purpose of this study is to analyse and find (1) KMPI Jember members' views on the

¹⁴ Budi Mulyadi, ‘Fenomena Penurunan Angka Pernikahan Dan Perkembangan Budaya Omiai Di Jepang’, *Kiryoku* 2, no. 2 (2018): 65–71.

¹⁵ Ita Puji Lestari, Sigit Ambar Widyawati, and Sri Wahyuni, ‘Pemberdayaan Ibu Sebagai Strategi Penurunan Angka Pernikahan Dini’, *Indonesian Journal of Community Empowerment (IJCE)* 1, no. 1 (2019).

¹⁶ Clearestha Nakita, ‘Upaya Penurunan Angka Perkawinan Anak (Studi Kasus Di Kecamatan Nawangan Kabupaten Pacitan)’, 2024.

sacredness of marriage, (2) KMPI Jember members' views on the decline in marriage rates among young people, and (3) Factors that cause KMPI Jember members to decide not to get married.

This research uses a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is research conducted to examine the conditions of natural objects.¹⁷ Qualitative research aims to gain a deeper understanding of human and social problems, not just explaining the surface aspects of a reality as is done in quantitative research.¹⁸ Qualitative research does not require a hypothesis, but instead it is expected to find a hypothesis and then the hypothesis will be tested in research using a quantitative approach.¹⁹ The type of this research is a case study. A case study is a scientific activity that is carried out intensively, in detail and in depth on an event, incident or activity, either at the scope of an individual, group of people, institution, or even an organisation with the aim of obtaining in-depth knowledge about the event, incident or activity. The selected event, incident or activity, or what is referred to as a case is an actual thing (*real-life events*), ongoing, not something that has passed.²⁰ Case study research serves to study the current situation and how the object of research interacts with its environment.²¹ The results of this research will be presented with a descriptive type of research, namely by describing and interpreting the object of research based on research findings from available data.²²

Researchers will make observations, utilise documentation and interview informants in order to gather information. This is done to get comprehensive results about the formulation of the problem in this study.²³ Informants were selected based on the following criteria in this study are students and female students who are members of the Komunitas Mahasiswa Pecinta Ilmu (KMPI) Jember who are not married in the "youth" age category. Youth in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 40 of 2009 is defined as Indonesian citizens aged between 16 sixteen to 30 (thirty) years.²⁴ Informant screening was conducted through observation results through a preliminary survey using an *online* questionnaire distributed to unmarried members of the Komunitas Mahasiswa Pecinta Ilmu (KMPI) Jember and then selected for ten participants for in-depth interviews.

The criteria were determined with the assumption that the members of the Komunitas Mahasiswa Pecinta Ilmu (KMPI) Jember are active in academic activities and intellectual discussions. The informants are assumed to be more likely to have diverse and informed views on social issues, including marriage and interpersonal relationships. In addition, university students are one of the young groups that have great influence in the social dynamics of society. Thus, understanding the informants' views, values and attitudes towards marriage can provide significant insights into marriage trends among young adults and can provide a broader representation of the informants' perspectives on the problem formulations in this study.

¹⁷ Rifa'i Abubakar, *Pengantar Metode Penelitian* (Yogyakarta: SUKA-Press UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2021).

¹⁸ Muhammad Rijal Fadli, 'Memahami Desain Metode Penelitian Kualitatif', *Humanika, Kajian Ilmiah Mata Kuliah Umum* 21, no. 1 (30 April 2021): 33–54, <https://doi.org/10.21831/hum.v21i1.38075>.

¹⁹ Sugiyono, *Metodologi Penelitian Kombinasi (Mixed Metodologi)* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2011).

²⁰ Mudjia Rahardjo, *Studi Kasus Dalam Penelitian Kualitatif: Konsep Dan Prosedurnya* (Malang: UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim, 2017).

²¹ Syafrida Hafni Sahir, *Metodologi Penelitian* (Bantul: KBM Indonesia, 2021).

²² Cut Medika Zellatifanny and Bambang Mudjiyanto, 'Tipe Penelitian Deskripsi Dalam Ilmu Komunikasi', *Diakom: Jurnal Media Dan Komunikasi* 1, no. 2 (2018): 83–90.

²³ Nurul Budi Murtini, 'FENOMENA PRAKTIK CINGKRANG IMPLEMENTASI LARANGAN ISBAL (Studi Living Hadis Pada Masyarakat Muslim Mangunharjo Probolinggo)', *Al-MAJALIS: Jurnal Dirasat Islamiyah* 7, no. 2 (2020): 163–206.

²⁴ Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia No. 40 tahun 2009

Result and Discussion

The Sacredness of Marriage and the Decline in Marriage Rates

The sacredness of marriage refers to the sacred, noble and honourable nature of marriage as an institution that has deep spiritual, social and moral significance. In many religious traditions, cultures and beliefs, marriage is seen as a bond involving a deep commitment between two individuals, often accompanied by responsibilities towards God, society and family. Through a legal marriage, people can find peace and tranquillity, even if they do not know each other personally.²⁵

The sacredness of marriage in Islam is reflected in the words of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala, as stated in Surah Ar-Rum verse 21:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ
“Among His signs is that He created mates for you from your own kind so that you may be at peace with them. He makes love and affection between you. Surely in that are signs for those who think.”²⁶

The verse confirms that marriage is not just a bond between two individuals, but a manifestation of Allah's greatness and a sign of His power in creating humans in pairs. Through marriage, Allah provides three main pillars that form the relationship between husband and wife, namely *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah*, which are the basis for the creation of a sacred and blessed relationship.

Sakinah (tranquility) reflects the ultimate goal of marriage, which is to create peace of mind and inner peace between the couple. The goal of marriage is *sakinah* or tranquillity and serenity, where previously the heart was filled with turbulent love and uncertainty.²⁷ In a harmonious household, *sakinah* is present when husband and wife support and understand each other, exercise their rights and obligations, and face the trials of life together with patience and trust in Allah. This serenity can only be realised when the marriage is based on strong faith values, where the couple makes God the centre of their relationship.

Mawaddah (loving affection) refers to the sincere and deep feelings of love between a husband and wife. *Mawaddah* is the spaciousness of the chest and the emptiness of the soul from ill will.²⁸ This love is not only physical, but also emotional and spiritual, being the ultimate bond in facing the ups and downs of life. *Mawaddah* motivates couples to sacrifice for each other and give their best for mutual happiness. This is in accordance with the Islamic concept that places love in marriage as worship, where it becomes a means to get closer to Allah.

Rahmah, or compassion, describes tender affection, empathy, and selfless care. *Rahmah* in a family is due to the process and patience of a husband and wife in building their household and through sacrifice as well as strength of spirit.²⁹ *Rahmah* is indispensable in maintaining the marital relationship, especially when couples face each other's weaknesses or faults. In the relationship between husband and wife, mercy demands mutual forgiveness, understanding, and care for one's partner's feelings. This shows that marriage is not only about rights, but also about the obligation to love and cherish with sincerity.

These three pillars show that marriage in Islam not only has a worldly dimension, but also a heavenly dimension. By involving Allah as part of the relationship, marriage becomes sacred

²⁵ Henderi Kusmidi Kusmidi, 'Konsep *Sakinah*, *Mawaddah* Dan *Rahmah* Dalam Pernikahan', *El-Afkar: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman Dan Tafsir Hadis* 7, no. 2 (2018): 63–78.

²⁶ Tim Penyempurnaan Terjemahan Al-Qur'an, *Al-Quran Dan Terjemahannya Edisi Penyempurnaan 2019* (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2019).

²⁷ M Arsyad Almakki, 'Siklus Rumah Tangga Islami Perspektif *Sakinah*, *Mawaddah*, *Rahmah*', *FIKRUNA* 2, no. 1 (2020): 15–25.

²⁸ Almakki.

²⁹ Almakki.

because it does not only aim to fulfil biological or social needs, but also as a means of worship to achieve Allah's pleasure. In this context, marriage reflects a relationship that transcends personal interests, becoming part of a mission to build a peaceful and pious society.

Therefore, the sacredness of marriage in Islam demands a strong commitment from both parties to maintain the values of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* in everyday life. By living and practising these values, married couples not only create a happy household, but also achieve the blessings of life in this world and the hereafter. Indeed, in a sacred marriage, there are signs of Allah's greatness for those who want to think and contemplate the meaning of life.

Value changes in society occur alongside globalisation and the influence of other cultures. In fact, the development of cyberspace, the internet, electronic and digital information is often found detached from value systems and cultures.³⁰ Changes in values in modern society due to globalisation and advances in digital technology have had a major impact on the way the younger generation views marriage, especially in relation to its sacredness. In this fast-paced era, traditional values of marriage as a sacred institution and divine mandate have been replaced by pragmatic and individualistic views. The younger generation is increasingly exposed to a global culture that emphasises personal freedom, material achievement and an independent lifestyle, which often contradicts the principle of the sacredness of marriage in Islam. This is reinforced by the influence of digital media that often portrays marriage as a burden or risk, rather than a field of worship and a source of blessing.

The phenomenon of declining marriage rates among young people is one of the impacts of this change in outlook. Many young individuals feel that marriage is no longer a top priority in their lives. The fear of huge responsibilities, financial instability and high divorce rates create a negative perception of marriage. In addition, the culture of individualism promoted through social media often instils the idea that happiness can be achieved without the commitment of marriage. Lifestyles that emphasise "self-love", "independent lifestyle", and attachment to material self-achievement erode the view that marriage is an act of worship and a trust.

In Islam, marriage has a sacred position that is affirmed in many verses of the Qur'an. Allah's words in Surah Ar-Rum verse 21 emphasise that marriage is a sign of Allah's greatness that brings peace (*sakinah*), love (*mawaddah*) and compassion (*rahmah*) between couples. However, when these values are ignored or replaced by a narrow worldly view, marriage loses its meaning as a way to achieve spiritual happiness and inner peace.

In addition, Allah also warns in Surah An-Nur verse 32:

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَأَمَائِكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِيهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

*"Marry off those who are celibate among you and those who are marriageable among your bond-servants, both men and women. If they are poor, Allah will enable them by His bounty. Allah is All-Wise (in His provision), All-Knowing."*³¹

This verse shows that marriage is a form of worship that is not only individual, but also social. Islam encourages its followers to marry as part of maintaining personal chastity and building a harmonious society. Financial worries that are often the reason for delaying marriage are answered directly by Allah with His promise to provide sustenance to couples who marry with good intentions.

³⁰ Idrus Afifuddin, 'Pergeseran Cara Pandang Terhadap Nilai-Nilai Sakral Pernikahan Pada Pelaku Perceraian Asn (Aparatur Sipil Negara) Di Kabupaten Banyumas' (doctoral, UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri, 2024), <https://repository.uinsaizu.ac.id/25145/>.

³¹ Tim Penyempurnaan Terjemahan Al-Qur'an, *Al-Quran Dan Terjemahannya Edisi Penyempurnaan 2019*.

However, in the modern context, these values are often overlooked. Younger generations focus more on the fear of failure, high costs, and social pressures, losing faith in God's promises. The decline in marriage is also indicative of a spiritual crisis, where marriage is no longer seen as a field of worship to draw closer to Allah, but rather as a worldly relationship full of risks.

To overcome this problem, a concerted effort is needed to revitalise the younger generation's views on marriage. Religious education that emphasises the sacred value of marriage, the presentation of harmonious Islamic family models, and a da'wah approach that is relevant to the digital era can be a solution. In addition, it is important to remind people that marriage is part of human nature, as stated in Surah Adz-Dzariyat verse 49:

وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

*"We have created everything in pairs so that you may remember (the greatness of Allah)."*³²

Based on the explanation above, the sacredness of marriage is a manifestation of the sanctity and greatness of Allah, which is reflected in the values of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* as the basis for a harmonious and blessed relationship between husband and wife. In Islam, marriage is not only seen as a worldly bond, but also as an act of worship and a divine mandate to achieve spiritual happiness and build a pious society. However, in the modern era, which is full of individualism and pragmatic views, the sacred values of marriage have begun to shift, creating challenges for the younger generation in understanding the true meaning of marriage. Therefore, a relevant educational and da'wah approach is needed to revitalise the understanding of marriage as a sacred institution that brings blessings in this world and the hereafter.

The Sacredness of Marriage Based on Qur'anic and Historical Evidence

Marriage in Islam is considered as something sacred because it has a strong basis from the Qur'an and Sunnah. There are many proofs that show the sacredness of marriage:

1. Marriage as a Verse of God

Allah *subhanahu wata'ala* says in the Qur'an in Surah Ar-Rum verse 21:

"And among the signs of His greatness is that He created for you wives of your own kind, that you may tend to them and be at ease with them, and that He may establish between you love and affection. Verily, in such things there are signs for those who think."

This verse shows that marriage is a sign of God's greatness. Marriage is not only a social contract, but also a bond based on love and tranquillity, as part of the system of life ordained by Allah.

2. The Marriage Bond as a Strong Covenant

Allah *subhanahu wata'ala* says in Surah An-Nisa verse 21:

"... and they (your wives) have taken from you a firm covenant."

Marriage in this verse is referred to as a *mitsaqan ghalizha* (strong covenant), indicating the importance of this bond in Islam. The term is also used in the context of the covenant Allah took from the prophets, emphasising the depth and seriousness of marriage.

3. The Prophet's Encouragement to Get Married

The Prophet ﷺ said in Bukhari and Muslim:

*"O young men, whoever among you is able to marry, then marry, for it is more likely to subdue the gaze and more likely to preserve honour. Whoever is not able to do so should fast, for that will be a shield for him."*³³

³² Tim Penyempurnaan Terjemahan Al-Qur'an.

³³ Abu Abdillāh Muḥammad bin Ismā'il Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* (Mesir: Al-Sulthāniyyah, 1893); Muslim bin Al-Hajjaj Al-Naisaburi Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Mesir: Mathba'ah 'Īsa, 1955).

This Hadīth shows that marriage is a prescribed way to preserve honour and subdue lust. This recommendation shows the sacredness of marriage as an act of worship that brings a Muslim closer to Allah.

4. Marriage as Worship

Marriage in Islam is considered part of worship. The Prophet ﷺ said in Muslim:

"Indeed, in your conjugal relations there is charity." The Companions asked: "O Messenger of Allah, will anyone of us who fulfils his desire be rewarded?" The Prophet replied: "Would it not be a sin for him to fulfil his desire for the unlawful? Then likewise, if he fulfils his desire in that which is lawful, he will be rewarded."³⁴

This Hadīth confirms that conjugal relations in marriage are not only halal but also rewarding if done with the right intention.

5. The Purity of Marriage Compared to Adultery

In the Qur'an, Allah *subhanahu wata'ala* commands Muslims to maintain the sanctity of relationships through marriage in Surah Al-Isra verse 32:

"And do not approach adultery; verily, adultery is an abominable deed and an evil way."

Marriage is the prescribed way to preserve the honour of oneself and one's family. The strong prohibition against adultery shows that marriage has a noble and sacred position in Islam.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that marriage is considered sacred in Islam because it is a sign of Allah's greatness, is regulated in *mitsaqan ghalizha* (a strong covenant), is recommended by the Prophet as part of maintaining honour and has the value of worship. These proofs from the Qur'an and hadith show that marriage is not just a worldly relationship but has a high spiritual dimension.

KMPI Jember Members' Views on the Sacredness of Marriage

The sacredness of marriage is a concept laden with religious and cultural values, becoming an important cornerstone of married life in Indonesian society. For members of the Komunitas Mahasiswa Pecinta Ilmu (KMPI) Jember, views on the sacredness of marriage not only reflect personal beliefs but also show how they navigate the demands of modernity while maintaining religious traditions. The following are KMPI Jember members' views on the sacredness of marriage:

1. Something great, sacred and full of responsibility

Marriage is something very sacred because it is a great covenant, holy and will be held accountable. This was conveyed by Bram Aditya Wicaksono (28 years old), a student at the University of Jember who said,

"The sacredness of marriage in terms of religion is regulated in the religious law itself which cannot be played with, so it must be maintained both because of the covenant between humans and Allah. Meanwhile, in the context of culture, it can also be considered sacred by local ancestors, and these customs can be carried out hand in hand with religious law, provided that these customs do not violate religious norms / religious law, because religious law is of a higher position than culture."³⁵

This statement was also supported by Dira Windari (26 years old), a student of Jember State Polytechnic who said,

*"The sacredness of marriage is the sanctity, nobility and honour and preciousness of marriage. Marriage constitutes a *mīthāq ghalīz* (solemn covenant) or a strong and majestic covenant not only between a man and a woman and their family but also with Allah. It is not something that can be played with, but something that if you want to do it, must be carefully prepared, and when you have entered it, must be maintained, cared for, and defended as much as possible."³⁶*

³⁴ Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.

³⁵ Bram Aditya Wicaksono, *Interview* (Jember, 12 July 2024).

³⁶ Dira Windari, *Interview* (Jember, 12 July 2024).

This statement was also supported by Mohammad Iqbal Ardiansah (31 years old), a student at the University of Jember who said,

*"Marriage is an act of worship that will be held accountable by Allah. Two different people are united in a sacred bond. In a cultural context, marriage unites two families, two tribes with different cultures, and two different customs. This is a sacred thing that becomes a legitimate guide in living human nature in continuing offspring."*³⁷

2. Not relevant to current conditions

The view of marriage as something sacred among young people is starting to fade and become irrelevant to current conditions, this is as stated by Rully Syafril Firmansyah (29 years old), a student at the University of Jember who said, " This perspective is increasingly irrelevant, as youth today disregard marital sacredness because it is only competition between friends and mature mental maturity in interpreting what marriage is."³⁸ This statement is supported by Dira Windari who said,

*"Looking at the current phenomenon, especially among young people whose relationships are not good, I see that the sacred values of marriage have faded. It is not uncommon for some to get married by force and hasten it because there are things that require the marriage to be held, an example that often occurs is pregnancy outside of marriage. Marriage is no longer a moment/event and a sacred bond anymore, but only as a form of cleaning a good name. Not infrequently also among the younger generation, making marriage only a race, a show off and prestige if you don't get married, feeling accomplished if you marry quickly at a young age even though many of them do not understand the science of marriage, are not mentally, physically and financially ready, which leads to household problems that cause divorce."*³⁹

3. Influenced by religious education and culture

Religious and cultural education in shaping views on the sacredness of marriage, this is as conveyed by Eka (22 years old), a student at the University of Jember who said,

*"Religion plays a big role in shaping people's personality in viewing marriage. Someone who already knows the religious knowledge about marriage will consider that marriage is something sacred that can protect himself from things that are forbidden. Whereas for those who may lack knowledge on this matter, they will consider that marriage is only a means to curb their growth and development, consider marriage only a burden, thus making marriage the umpteenth option."*⁴⁰

This statement was supported by Dira Windari who said,

*"It's very big. If a person understands the religion and pays attention to the culture properly, of course he will not carelessly decide to get married. Because marriage is a promise or bond not only with humans (partner, family) but also with God. He will know and measure his readiness for marriage and will prepare well."*⁴¹

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that KMPI Jember members' views on the sacredness of marriage include (1) something serious and full of responsibility, (2) not relevant to current conditions, and (3) influenced by religious and cultural education.

KMPI Jember Members' Views on Reducing Marriage Rates among Young People

The decline in marriage rates among young people has become a phenomenon that attracts the attention of various groups, members of the Komunitas Mahasiswa Pecinta Ilmu (KMPI) who belong to the young age group are also criteria in this phenomenon.

³⁷ Mohammad Iqbal Ardiansah, *Interview* (Jember, 12 July 2024).

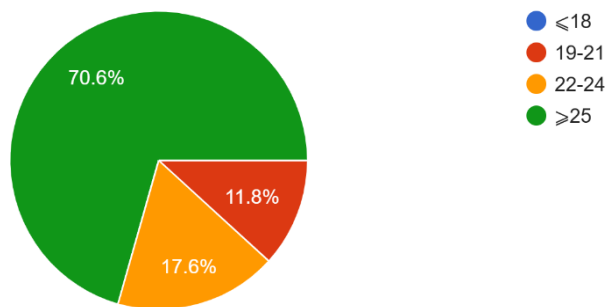
³⁸ Rully Syafril Firmansyah, *Interview* (Jember, 12 July 2024).

³⁹ Dira Windari, *Interview* (Jember, 12 July 2024).

⁴⁰ Eka, *Interview* (Jember, 12 July 2024).

⁴¹ Dira Windari, *Interview* (Jember, 12 July 2024).

Picture 2: Age Chart of KMPI Jember Members



Source: Pre-research Observation

The phenomenon of declining marriage rates among young people reflects significant changes in social, economic, and cultural values that influence young people's decisions to delay or even avoid marriage. The following are KMPI Jember members' views on the decline in marriage among young people:

1. Has a close relationship with social and cultural values

The decline in marriage among young people is closely related to changes in social and cultural values. This is as stated by Dira Windari who said,

*"In today's modern era, values regarding marriage have changed significantly compared to previous generations. Today, many individuals are increasingly prioritising their education and careers. They prefer to achieve financial and social independence before entering into marriage. Culturally, there is also a higher perception of marriage. Many people think and insist that weddings must be held with great fanfare and this is certainly what makes it more difficult for this generation to get married."*⁴²

Achmad Farid Romdoni (25 years old), a student of Jember State Polytechnic reinforces this statement by saying, " Sometimes you want to get married with a simple event but are hindered by local cultural factors, for example, a region requires a dowry of so much and the event takes days."⁴³

2. Influenced by economic factors

Economic factors play a significant role in the decline in marriage rates among young people. This was conveyed by Rully Syafril who said, "The decline in marriage rates is due to economic factors, one of the socio-cultural values, because easy children who are getting married always feel unprepared due to lack of economic *support*, work, or poor financial management."⁴⁴ This statement was reinforced by Eka who said,

*"Significantly, those who are in the 'lower middle' economy may think twice when deciding to get married in conditions of unstable economic stability. The high cost of living is also a reason for young people to consider getting married at a young age. Because not only do they need to be with their partner, there are certainly needs for their children's future that need to be fulfilled. In addition, sometimes the dependence on being the backbone of the family also causes a decline in marriage among young people. Many young people feel the need to help the family economy, so they put aside their desire to get married and choose to delay marriage."*⁴⁵

3. There are education and career roles

The role of education and career in influencing young people's decision to delay or avoid marriage is common. This is as stated by Dira Windari who said, "For those who really think that by getting married they will find it difficult to have a career and pursue education, of course they will delay or even not get married. Many of today's young people think that

⁴² Dira Windari, *Interview* (Jember, 12 July 2024).

⁴³ Achmad Farid Romdoni, *Interview* (Jember, 12 July 2024).

⁴⁴ Rully Syafril Firmansyah, *Interview* (Jember, 12 July 2024).

⁴⁵ Eka, *Interview* (Jember, 12 July 2024).

marriage with a high career and education cannot go hand in hand."⁴⁶ This statement is supported by Zamzam Nur Wahidin (27 years old), a student at the University of Jember who said, "There are still quite a few who postpone marriage on the grounds that they still want to continue their educational career or still focus on working."⁴⁷

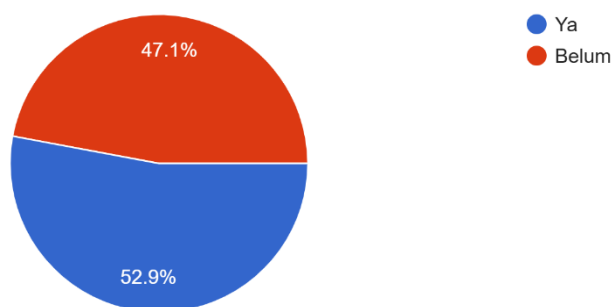
However, a different opinion was conveyed by Bram who said, "Although there are some young women who postpone marriage for reasons to focus on pursuing education and careers, there are also those who actually choose to marry young so that their education is more focused because so that 'there are friends' in the education process, and choose to marry young so that their fortune is also 'interested', because marriage brings a lot of fortune."⁴⁸

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the views of KMPI Jember members on the decline in marriage rates among young people include (1) having a close relationship with social and cultural values, (2) being influenced by economic factors and (3) the role of education and career.

Factors that Cause KMPI Jember Members to Decide to Be Unmarried

The decision to postpone marriage among young people, including members of Komunitas Muda Pencinta Islam (KMPI), reflects complex social and individual dynamics.

Picture 3: Marital Status Chart of KMPI Jember Members



Source: Pre-research Observation

The observation results show that 47.1% of KMPI Jember members are unmarried due to several factors. The following are the factors that cause members of kmpi jember to decide not to get married:

1. Economic and emotional stability

Financial stability and emotional readiness play a role in influencing KMPI Jember members' decision to delay marriage. This is as conveyed by Eka who said,

"Financial stability and emotional readiness influence my decision to choose not to get married. I don't want to rush things, and I need to be ready to work on these two things. I have some concerns about these two aspects, but rather than worrying, I prefer to slowly prepare these two aspects. Finances in marriage for me are 'enough', not necessarily overly important in marriage, because I see myself in the reality around me that they are quite difficult when fulfilling the needs for their family because from the beginning they have not considered properly related to finances. As a result, there are many domestic fights due to economic factors that lead to the breakdown of marriages or unhappiness of individuals in their marriages. In addition, I see many children who cannot grow properly (stunting) because their parents have not been able to properly fulfil the

⁴⁶ Dira Windari, *Interview* (Jember, 12 July 2024).

⁴⁷ Zamzam Nur Wahidin, *Interview* (Jember, 13 July 2024).

⁴⁸ Bram Aditya Wicaksono, *Interview* (Jember, 12 July 2024).

nutritional needs of their children. The problem of sustenance has indeed been arranged by Allah and certainly everyone has their own rations. But for me, it would be wise and good if I could prepare and save some of my income for the future. Emotional readiness is also important, because I observe many realities of someone who is not emotionally ready to choose to get married and have children will generally have a bad impact on marriage and child development. Emotions or traumas that have not been resolved and managed properly can have a negative impact on couples and children. The reality is that someone who has not finished with past trauma or their own emotions, can vent to their partner and children, such as physical or verbal violence. So it would be wise if I prepare myself emotionally well, and try to regulate my own emotions so that hopefully it will not become an emotional test for my partner and children."⁴⁹

The same thing was also conveyed by Kumara (22 years old), a student of Jember University who said,

*"I'm really worried about being a failed husband and father. We must stop the chain of irresponsible fathers and husbands. Don't let your wife and children be traumatised. We men are the pillar and head of the family, must be able to lead and provide everything. Isn't everything in this world entrusted, so yes, to carry out this task, let alone being entrusted with a small family, we must prepare everything carefully."*⁵⁰

2. Family and neighbourhood pressure

Pressure from the family and the surrounding environment is one of the factors causing KMPI Jember members to delay marriage. This was conveyed by Achmad who said, "There is a desire from the family so that I delay getting married, so that if this desire has not been achieved, it is difficult to get a blessing."⁵¹ This is reinforced by Eka's explanation who said, "There are influences from family, friends, and the neighbourhood. My economic condition and role in the family as the first child made me choose to postpone my desire to get married and choose to help the family economy and the education of my younger siblings. Friends and neighbours who tend to rush into marriage and end up with household problems, also influenced me to make the decision to get married when I was emotionally ready."⁵²

3. Education and career

Education and career play a role in KMPI Jember members' decision to remain unmarried. They feel they need to reach a certain point in their career or education before considering marriage. This is as conveyed by Eka who said,

*"Education and career are quite influential in the decision to postpone the desire to get married. For me, it is necessary to reach a certain point in my career and education in accordance with the dreams and life goals that I have planned. The self-development that can be achieved while pursuing education and career can shape myself into a more mature and emotionally mature person is also a reason to consider postponing marriage."*⁵³

The same thing was also conveyed by another informant, Kumara, who said,

*"It's really necessary to play a role, actually at least have a profession first. Must be finance stable first. At least it's not just finance but mentality as well. So when you can take care of yourself, then you can consider marriage, but if life is still grumpy, then don't, don't make your wife a maid, they must be treated like a princess. As long as we can fulfil and treat our future wife like a princess (financially and mentally) why not."*⁵⁴

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the views of the factors that cause KMPI Jember members to decide not to get married are (1) economic and emotional stability, (2) family and neighbourhood pressure and (3) education and career.

⁴⁹ Eka, *Interview* (Jember, 12 July 2024).

⁵⁰ Kumara, *Interview* (Jember, 13 July 2024).

⁵¹ Achmad Farid Romdoni, *Interview* (Jember, 12 July 2024).

⁵² Eka, *Interview* (Jember, 12 July 2024).

⁵³ Eka, *Interview* (Jember, 12 July 2024).

⁵⁴ Kumara, *Interview* (Jember, 13 July 2024).

Conclusion

Based on the above discussion, the conclusion of this research is as follows:

1. Islam conceptualizes marriage as a sacred act of worship ('ibādah) based on the values of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah*, reflecting the greatness of Allah. However, the influence of modernisation and individualism has shifted this view, so education and da'wah efforts are needed to restore the understanding of marriage as a noble institution that brings blessings in the world and the hereafter.
2. Marriage is considered sacred in Islam because it is a sign of Allah's greatness, is regulated in *mitsaqan ghalizha* (a strong covenant), is recommended by the Prophet as part of maintaining honour, and has the value of worship. These proofs from the Qur'an and hadith show that marriage is not just a worldly relationship, but has a high spiritual dimension.
3. Three key themes emerged regarding KMPI members' views on marital sacredness (1) something serious and full of responsibility, (2) irrelevant to current conditions and (3) influenced by religious and cultural education.
4. The views of KMPI Jember members on the decline in marriage among young people include (1) a close relationship with social and cultural values, (2) influenced by economic factors and (3) the role of education and career.

The factors that cause KMPI Jember members to decide not to get married are (1) economic and emotional stability, (2) family and neighbourhood pressure and (3) education and career.

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